

Siirtolapuutarhapelit / Allotment-games

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This 'planned project' proposal for Graphica Creativa 09, theme: Co-operation, combines printmaking and participatory art processes. The process would involve the collaborative design and digital printing of a new game 'tile-set', based on the popular tile-based board-game 'Carcassonne' (see references below). Graphically, this would mean developing an inter-connected set of 77 square tiles (approx size: 5cm x 5cm each), combining to form a visual representation of allotments - siirtolapuutarhat - including vegetable plots, saunas, urban buildings, roads and other suburban features. The project aims, through this activity, to raise awareness of allotment culture & urban farming activism, following adaptive methods originating in fan-based board-game modification culture.

Members of the public – potentially exhibition visitors or other solicited through public notices – would be invited; and relevant local special-interest groups consulted, for example Jyväskylä's Sulkuranta siirtolapuutarha), to contribute to the design and content of the tiles. Myself and 1 or 2 graphic designers would facilitate and assist the tile-design process, leading towards a new game tile-set being printed and mounted on cardboard squares. The remaining game-pieces necessary, for example figure-counters, will be used from the original 'Carcassonne' game.

This process may indeed be a 'live' installation during the exhibition period, with a small public 'office'/production space, for example 3-4 metres square, to negotiate, collaborate, draw, scan, and possibly print the designs for the new tile-set, depending upon the technique chosen. It would also be the location of play, with table and chairs. Graphical illustrations and process documents will be displayed on the wall. Through a series of public game-play events, the tiles would be used to play our adapted, Carcossonne-inspired, 'Allotment-games' ('Siirtolapuutarhapelit').

This proposal does not yet determine whether the graphic work is fully autographic, or using a traditional printmaking technique such as lithography; digital illustration or a combination of either/all. Much would depend on resources and funds available for making the new tile-set, and printing several copies. However, to maintain some form of coherence, it could follow approximately the aesthetic style and format of the original 'Carcassonne' tiles. Once the new 'siirtolapuutarhapelit' tile-set has been made, the design-illustrations would be available for distribution over the internet, so that they may be played in other contexts, ideally, used to raise awareness of the culture and practice of maintaining a real allotment.

'Serious games' use game-play to introduce and raise empathy with topics social, political and economic issues. The whole process of inviting, consulting, negotiating and making, would ideally inspire discussion on the practice of urban farming, and the history, context and practice of Finnish siirtolapuutarha, allotment/dacha culture. The game strategies may not mirror those employed in real life. However, in the current and imagined near-future of increased food cost, and/or socio-economic stress, having a small piece of land to grow food, herbs, flowers, relax, socialise.. may become increasingly important.

Further, creative appropriation, extension and modification will be made public in this work: offline, onsite, in exhibition. Following example and experience of social art and activist processes, this project aims to publicise how such peer-based creativity (in game cultures) can be harnessed to open new or contradictory projects such as environmental or ecological investment and urban land-use planning.

Background material & links

Carcassonne

'Carcassonne' is a strategy game for two to five players, originally designed by Klaus-Jürgen Wrede, was published in 2000 by Hans im Glück in German and Rio Grande Games in English. The game-board is built by the players as the game progresses. Tiles include interlinking features, for example: roads must connect to roads, fields to fields, and city walls to city walls. Different extensions have extended the visual theme of the game beyond a landscape of walled cities and fields, although not 'far' outwith the medieval historical period.

<http://www.riograndegames.com/games.html?id=48>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carcassonne>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carcassonne:_Hunters_and_Gatherers

<http://www.boardgamegeek.com/image/104362>

Unofficial extensions:

http://www.naturelich.com/games/archives/2005/08/inofficial_extensions_for_carc.html

Allotment Gardens

"Allotment gardens are characterised by a concentration in one place of a few or up to several hundreds of land parcels that are assigned to individual families. In allotment gardens, the parcels are cultivated individually, contrary to other community garden types where the entire area is tended collectively by a group of people. The individual size of a parcel ranges between 200 and 400 square meters, and often the plots include a shed for tools and shelter. The individual gardeners are organised in an allotment association which leases the land from the owner who may be a public, private or ecclesiastical entity, provided that it is only used for gardening (i.e. growing vegetables, fruits and flowers), but not for residential purposes. The gardeners have to pay a small membership fee to the association, and have to abide with the corresponding constitution and by-laws. On the other hand, the membership entitles them to certain democratic rights."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allotment_%28gardening%29

<http://www.siirtolapuutarhaliitto.fi/>

http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Allotments_in_Finland

<http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siirtolapuutarha/>

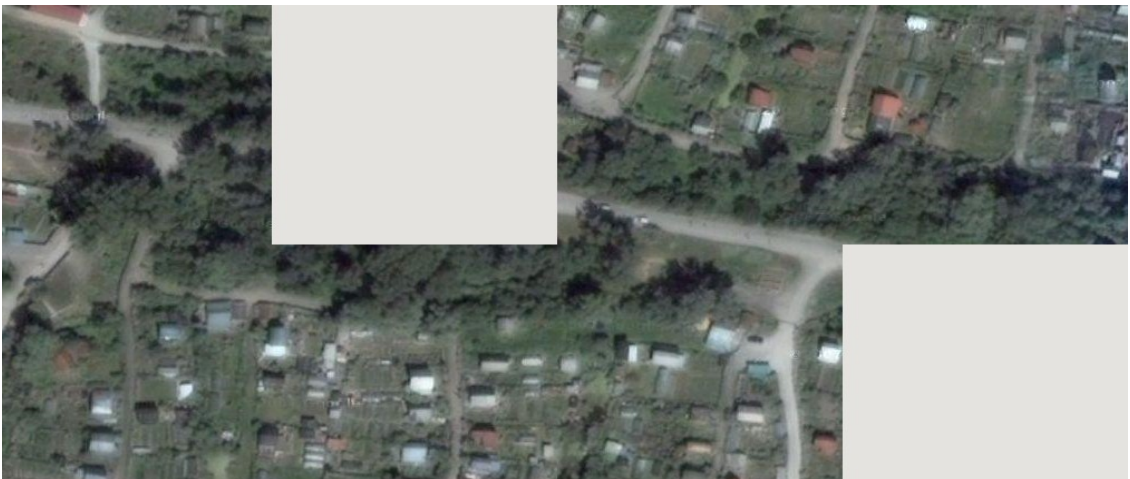
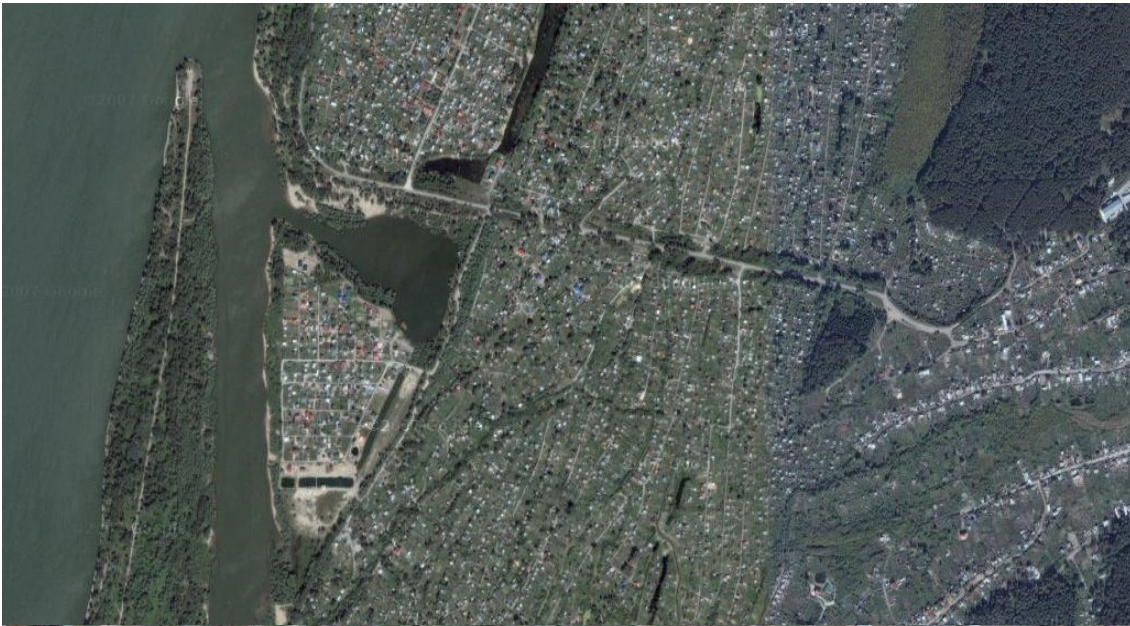
<http://groups.msn.com/Sukuranta/>



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Chaticky_Krejcarek.jpg



<http://www.boardgamegeek.com/image/85355>



<http://maps.google.com/maps?l=54.875573,83.03581&z=14&t=h&hl=en>